

critical digest

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The Weekly Newsletter Digest of the Current New York Theatre Scene

New York Openings This Week

School for Wives-ANTA Playhouse, 3/18/51. ANTA limited run presentation of Theatre de L'Athenes in the Moliere classic starring Louis Jouvet. Production is in French.

Digests of Current Reviews -- more on back page

The Green Pastures-Broadway, 3/15/51. Unanimous applause of daily appraisers welcomed back Marc Connelly's fable, with William Marshall in the role of "de Lawd" With only minor reservations all departments were praised. Critics generally agreed that except for Marshall's youth he was just about perfect. Atkinson, Times, thought he was kindly, rather than grand. While McClellan, Journal American complained that dialect made him difficult to understand. Ossie Davis, Avon Long Alonzo Bosan and the Hall Johnson Choir shared adjectives among the large cast. Robert Edmond Jones sets and Connelly's direction were deemed superb. Revival lacked some of the spiritual loftiness of the original. commented Watts, Post. He also felt Broadway Theatre was too large for the production. Pollock, Compass, didn't find play as amusing as he first thought it was.

Springtime for Henry-Golden, 3/14/51. Newspaper reviewers greeted revival of Benn W. Levy's farce with friendly mild reviews which honored Edward Everett Horton. Actor has been touring the country in the play since 1932, and only two critics were unkind enough to tell him he should have kept it out of New York City. Altogether the production which features Hugh Wakefield, Ursula Howells and Haila Stoddard received four "con" notices from Journal American, Post, Eagle and Women's Wear critics. They felt play was very badly dated and that scant humor was spread too thin. Critics who had seen original 1931 production found present version couldn't compare in acting or pace. Critics of Time and World Telegram & Sun were inclined to give Horton the benefit of the doubt, though they were undecided in their final opinion.

Romeo and Juliet-Broadhurst, 3/10/51. Split decision filed by daily critics on merits of Olivia de Havilland's performance in the Dwight Deere Wiman offices production of the Shakespeare classic. Actually Oliver Messel's lavish sets and costumes won top honors. Every reviewer except Atkinson, Times, praised them for framing one of Broadway's most beautiful productions of the Bard. Times critic, who praised play felt there was much too much scenery on stage. Critics of Herald Tribune, News, Compass, Eagle and Morning Telegraph panned production and star for lacking in the required poetry and music. They suggested that Miss Havilland recited her lines too often, tried too hard to play youthful, and was too ambitious a part to try. Jack Hawkins was singled out by two reviewers as being in the true lyrical manner. Director Peter Glenville was blamed by Bolton, Morning Telegraph, for misdirecting and mis-casting. Hawkins, WT&S, noting that the star received 16 curtain calls praised entire production as being perfect.

Editorial Pros and Cons

Billboard TV critic for the second time in recent weeks panned "Showtime USA" which is produced in cooperation with ANTA. Reviewer was perturbed that program with unlimited talent resources still fails to make the grade. Except for a three to five minute scene from a current play or past hit, the Vinton Freedley produced telecast shapes up as merely another TV variety show. ANTA is missing a great promotion opportunity to encourage theatre-going throughout the country if it doesn't revise the program's format.

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' A Key to NYC Criticism At A Glance '
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Shows are rated as to how the critics liked them not if they think they will be hits. "So-So" means the critic did not state directly if he recommends the show for an entertaining or stimulating evening.

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| 1. NY Times | 11. Women's Wear Daily | 21. Freeman |
| 2. NY Herald Tribune | 12. Wall Street Journal | 22. Commonwealth |
| 3. NY News | 13. Journal of Commerce | 23. Cue |
| 4. NY Mirror | 14. George Jean Nathan | 24. Chr.Sci.Monitor |
| 5. NY Compass | 15. Ward Morehouse | 25. Sat.Review Lit. |
| 6. NY Post | 16. Morning Telegraph | 26. Newsweek |
| 7. NY Journal American | 17. Variety | 27. Time |
| 8. World Telegram & Sun | 18. Billboard | 28. Nation |
| 9. Brooklyn Eagle | 19. Theatre Arts | 29. New Republic |
| 10. Newark News | 20. New Leader | 30. New Yorker |

- AFFAIRS OF STATE-Music Box, 9/25/50. Pro: 2-3-4-5-7-8-13-17-18-27-30.
Con: 1-6-9-10-11-12-14-15-19-20-22-24-25-26-29.
- ANGEL IN THE PAINTSHOP-Booth, 1/18/51. Pro: 3-6-8-10-11-12-13-18-30.
Con: 1-2-4-5-7-9-15-16-17-19-23-26-27-29.
- THE AUTUMN GARDEN-Coronet, 3/7/51. Pro: 2-3-7-8-9-16-23-26-27-28-30.
Con: 1-4-5-6-10-11-15-17-18.
- BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE-Barrymore, 11/14/50. Pro: 23 votes.
Con: 2-6-15-17-19-20-22.
- BILLY BUDD-Biltmore, 2/10/51. Pro: 1-6-8-9-10-13-17-23-24-25-26-27-28-29.
Con: 2-3-4-5-7-11-12-18-20-22-30.
- CALL ME MADAM-Imperial, 10/12/50. Pro: 23 votes. Con: 18-19-28-29. So-So: 3.
- THE COUNTRY GIRL-Lyceum, 11/10/50. Pro: 23 votes. Con: 4-8-14-27-28-30.
- GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES-Ziegfeld, 12/8/50. Pro: 21 votes. Con: 6-28.
So-So: 14-18-22-23-27.
- GUYS AND DOLLS-46th St. Theatre, 11/24/50. Pro: 29 votes. Con: 28.
- THE HAPPY TIME-Plymouth, 1/24/50. Pro: 20 votes. Con: 5-6-15-19-26-27-28-30.
- THE HIGH GROUND-48th St. Theatre, 2/20/51. Pro: 4-6-7-10. Con: 1-2-3-5-8-9.
- KISS ME KATE-Shubert, 12/31/48. Pro: 27 votes. Con: 29.
- THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING-Royale, 12/8/50. Pro: 23 votes. Con: 3-5-11-29.
So-So: 17-30.
- THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING-Empire, 1/5/50. Pro: 25 votes. Con: 14. So-So: 2-27-30.
- THE MOON IS BLUE-Miller, 3/8/51. Pro: 19 votes. None: 12-13-14-19-20-21-22-28.
- OUT OF THIS WORLD-Century, 12/21/50. Pro: 4-5-6-7-8-10-11-13-23-29-30. So-So: 2.
Con: 1-3-9-12-17-18-19-20-21-22-24-26-27.
- THE ROSE TATTOO-Martin Beck, 2/3/51. Pro: 17 votes. Con: 4-6-7-14-24-25-27.
So-So: 8.
- SEASON IN THE SUN-Cort, 9/28/50. Pro: 19 votes. Con: 9-11-20-24-28. So-So: 10.
- SECOND THRESHOLD-Morosco, 1/2/51. Pro: 1-2-3-5-6-7-8-10-11-12-16-19-22-25-26-30.
Con: 4-9-13-14-17-18-20-23-27-28.
- SOUTH PACIFIC-Majestic, 4/8/49. Pro: 1-2-3-4-6-7-8-11-13-15-16-17-18-19-24-25-26-30.
Con: 27. So-So: 23.
- TWENTIETH CENTURY-Fulton, 12/24/50. Pro: 20 votes. Con: 5-24-28.
- DARKNESS AT NOON-Royale, 1/13/51. Pro: 16 votes. Con: 1-14-17-19-22-24-26-29.
So-So: 5-13-23.

